THE HUMBLE PETITION OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE GENERALL ASSEMBLY TO THE KINGS MAJESTY.

Their Declaration ſent to the Parliament of ENGLAND.

Their Letter to ſome Brethren of the Miniſtery there.

And their Commiſſion to their Brother Maſter *Alexander Henderſon*, January 1643.

EDINBURGH,
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To the Kings most excellent Majesty.

The humble Petition of the Commissioners of the Generall Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland, *from their meeting at Edinburgh, January* 4. 1643.

OUr silence and ceasing to present before Your Majesty our humble thoughts and desires at this time of common danger to Religion, to Your Majesties sacred Person, Your Crown, and Posteritie, and to all Your Majesties Dominions, were impiety against God, unthankfulnes and disloyalty against Your Majesty, an indirect approbation and hardening of the adversaries of Truth and Peace in their wicked wayes, and a cruelty against our Brethren, lying in such depths of affliction and anguish of spirit; any one of which crimes were in us, above all others most inexcusable, and would prove us most unworthie of the trust committed unto us. The flame of this common combustion hath almost devoured Ireland, is now wasting the Kingdome of England, & we cannot tell how soon it shal enter upon our selves, & set this Your Majesties most ancient and native Kingdome on fire: If in this wofull case and lamentable condition of Your Majesties Dominions all others should be silent, it becometh us to speak; and if our tongues and pens should cease, our consciences within us would cry out, and the stones in the streets would answer us.

Our great grief and apprehension of danger, is not a little encreased, partly by the insolencie and presumption of Papists and others dis-affected to the Reformation of Religion, who although for their number and power, they be not considerable amongst us; yet through the successe

of the Popiſh party in Ireland, and the hopes they conceive of the prevailing power of Popiſh Armies, and the Prelaticall Faction in England, they have of late taken ſpirits, and begun to ſpeak big words againſt the Reformation of Religion, and the Work of God in this Land; and partly and more principally, that a chief praiſe of the Proteſtant Religion, and thereby our not vain, but juſt gloriation, is by the publick Declaration of the Earle of Newcaſtle, Generall of Your Majeſties Forces in the Northern parts, and neareſt unto us, transferred unto Papiſts; who although they be ſworn enemies unto Kings, and be as infamous for their Treaſons and Conſpiracies againſt Princes and Rulers, as for their known Idolatrie and ſpirituall Tyrannie; yet are they openly declared to be, not good Subjects, or better Subjects, but far better Subjects then Proteſtants; which is a new and foul diſparagement of the reformed Religion, a notable injurie to Your Majeſty in Your Honour, a ſenſible reflection upon the whole Body of this Kingdome, which is impatient that any Subjects, but abhorreth, and extremely diſdaineth that Papiſts, who refuſe to take the Oath of Allegeance, ſhould be compared with them in allegeance and fidelitie; and, which as a ſtrange doctrine, from the mouth or pen of profeſſed Proteſtants, wil ſuffer an hard conſtruction from all the Reformed Kirks.

We therefore Your Majeſties moſt humble and loving Subjects, upon theſe and the like conſiderations, do humbly intreat, That Your Majeſty may be pleaſed in Your Princely wiſedome, Firſt to conſider, That the intentions of Papiſts, directed by the principles of their Profeſſion, are no other, then they have been from the beginning, even to build their Babel, and to ſet up their execrable Idolatry, and Antichriſtian Tyrannie in all Your Majeſties Domini-

Dominions, to change the Face of Your two Kingdomes of Scotland and England, into the ſimilitude of miſerable Ireland, which is more bitter to the people of God, Your Majeſties good Subjects, to think upon, than death: And whatſoever their preſent pretences be for the defence of Your Majeſties Perſon and Authoritie; yet in the end by their arms and power, with a diſplayed banner, to bring that to paſſe againſt Your Royall Perſon and Poſterity, which the fifth of November, never to be forgotten, was not able by their ſubtile and under-mining treaſon to produce; Or which will be their greateſt mercy, to reduce Your Majeſty, and Your Kingdomes, to the baſe and unnaturall ſlavery of their Monarch the Pope: And next, that Your Majeſty upon this undeniable evidence,, may timouſly and ſpeedily apply Your Royall Authority for diſ-banding their Forces, ſuppreſſing their Power, and diſappointing their bloudy and mercileſſe projects. And for this end we are with greater earneſtnes than before, conſtrained to fall down again before Your Majeſty, and in all humility to renew the Supplication of the late Generall Aſſembly, and our own former Petition in their name, for unity of Religion, and for uniformity of Church-government in all Your Majeſties Dominions: And to this effect for a meeting of ſound Divines to be held in England, unto which according to the deſire of Your Majeſties Parliament, ſome Commiſſioners may be ſent from this Kirk, that in all points to be proponed and debated, there may be the greater conſent and harmonie.

We take the boldnes to be the more inſtant in this our humble deſire, becauſe it concerneth the Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſo much in his glory, your Majeſty in your honor, the Kirk of England which we ought to tender as our own bowels, & whoſe reformation is more dear to us, than our lives,

in her happineſſe , and the Kirk of Scotland in her purity and peace: Former experience, and daily ſenſe teaching us, that without the Reformation of the Kirk of England, there is no hope nor poſſibilitie of the continuance of Reformation here.

The Lord of Heaven and Earth , whoſe Vicegerent Your Majeſty is, calleth for this great Work of Reformation at Your hands, and the preſent commotions and troubles of Your Majeſties Dominions , are either preparations in the mercy of God , for this bleſſed Reformation and unity in Religion, which is the deſire, prayer, and expectation of all Your Majeſties good Subjects in this Kingdome , Or, which they tremble to think upon , and earneſtly deprecate, are in the juſtice of God for the abuſe of the Goſpel, the tolerating of Idolatry and Superſtition againſt ſo clear a light, and not acknowledging the day of viſitation ; The beginnings of ſuch a dolefull deſolation, as no policie or power of man, ſhal be able to prevent, and as ſhall make Your Majeſties Kingdomes within a ſhort time as miſerable as now they may be happy by a Reformation of Religion. God forbid, that while the Houſes of Parliament do profeſſe their deſire of the Reformation of Religion in a peaceable and Parliamentarie way , and paſſe their Bills for that end in the particulars, That Your Majeſty, the Nurſe-father of the Kirk of Chriſt, to whoſe care the cuſtody and vindication of Religion doth principally belong , ſhould to the provoking of the anger of God , the ſtopping of the influence of ſo many bleſſings from Heaven, & the grieving of the hearts of all the godly, fruſtrate our expectation, make our hopes aſhamed, and hazard the loſſe of the hearts of all Your good People, which next unto the truth and unity of Religion, and the ſafety of Your Kingdomes , are willing to hazard their lives,

lives, and ſpend their bloud for Your Majeſties honour and happineſſe.

We are not ignorant that the Work is great, the difficulties and impediments be many, and that there be both Mountains and Lyons in the way. The ſtrongeſt lett, till it be taken out of the way, is the Mountain of Prelacie: And no wonder, if Your Majeſtie conſider how many Papiſts, and Popiſhly affected, have for a long time found peace and eaſe under the ſhadow thereof; How many of the Prelaticall Faction have thereby their life and being; How many profane & worldly men do fear the yoke of Chriſt, and are unwilling to ſubmit themſelves to the obedience of the Goſpel; And how many there be, whoſe eyes are dazelled with the externall pomp and glory of the Kirk, whoſe mindes are miſ-carried with a conceit of the governing the Kirk by the rules of humane Policy, & whoſe hearts are affrighted with the apprehenſion of the dangerous conſequences which may enſue upon alterations. But when Your Majeſtie in Your Princely and religious wiſedome, ſhall remember from the Records of former times, how againſt the gates of hell, the force & fraud of worldly and wicked men, and all Panick fears of danger, the Chriſtian Religion was firſt planted, and the Chriſtian Kirks thereafter reformed, & from the condition of the preſent times, how many from the experience of the tyranny of Prelates, are afraid to diſcover themſelves, leſt they be revenged upon them hereafter: Whereas Prelacie being removed, they would openly profeſſe what they are, & joyn with others in the way of Reformation; All obſtacles and difficulties ſhall be but matter of the manifeſtation of the power of God, the principall worker, and the means of the greater glory to Your Majeſtie the prime Inſtrument.

The intermixture of the government of Prelates with the

the Civill State, mentioned in Your Majesties Answer to our former Petition, being taken away, and the right Government by Assemblies, which is to be seen in all the Reformed Kirks, and wherein the agreement will be easie, being settled; The Kirk and Religion will be more pure and free of mixture, and the Civill Government more sound and firme; That Government of the Kirk, must sute best with the Civill State, and be most usefull for Kings and Kingdomes, which is best warranted by GOD, by whom Kings do raigne, and Kingdomes are established; Nor can a Reformation be expected in the Common and ordinary way, expressed also in Your Majesties Answer. The wisest and most Religious Princes have found it impossible, and implying a repugnancie, since the persons to be reformed, and the Reformers, must be diverse, and the way of Reformation must be different from the corrupt way, by which defections of Kirk-men, and corruptions in doctrine, worship, & Government have entred into the Kirk. Suffer us therefore (Dread Soveraigne) to renew our Petitions for this unity of Religion, and uniformity of Kirk-government, and for a meeting of sound Divines of both Kingdomes, who may prepare matters for Your Majesties view, and for the examination and approbation of more full Assemblies.

The Nationall Assembly of this Kirk, from which we have our Commission, did promise in their thanksgiving for the many favours expressed in Your Majesties Letter, their best endeavours to keep the people under their charge, in unity and peace, and in loyalty and obedience to Your Majestie and Your Laws, which we confesse is a duty well beseeming the preachers of the Gospel: But we cannot conceale, how much both Pastors and People are grieved and disquieted with the late reports of

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the ſucceſſe, boldnes, and ſtrength of Popiſh forces in Ireland and England, and how much danger from the power of ſo malicious & bloudy Enemies, is apprehended to the Religion & peace of this Kirk & Kingdome, conceived by them to be the ſpring whence have iſſued all their calamities and miſeries: Which we humbly remonſtrate to Your Majeſty, as a neceſſity requiring a General Aſſembly, & do earneſtly ſupplicate for the preſence and aſſiſtance of Your Majeſties Commiſſioner at the day to be appointed, That by univerſall conſent of the whole Kirk, the beſt courſe may be taken for the preſervation of Religion, and for the averting of the great wrath which they conceive to be imminent to this Kingdome.

If it ſhall pleaſe the Lord, in whoſe hand is the heart of the King, as the rivers of waters to turn it whitherſoever he will, to incline Your Majeſties heart, to this through Reformation, no more to tolerate the Maſſe, or any part of Romiſh ſuperſtition or Tyrannie, and to command that all good means be uſed for the converſion of Your Princely conſort the Queens Majeſty, which is alſo the humble deſire of this whole Kirk and Kingdome, Your joynt comforts ſhall be multiplied above the dayes of Your affliction, to Your incredible joy, Your glory ſhall ſhine in brightneſſe above all Your Royall Progenitors, to the Admiration of the World, and the terrour of Your Enemies; And Your Kingdomes ſo far abound in Righteouſneſſe, Peace, and Proſperity above all that hath been in former Generations, that they ſhall ſay; *It is good for us that we have been afflicted.*

A. Ker *Cler. Commiſſ. Gen. Aſſ.*

TO THE HONOURABLE HOUSES of the Parliament of ENGLAND.

The Declaration of the Commissioners of the Generall Assembly of the Kirk of SCOTLAND, *from their meeting at Edinburgh. Jan.* 4. 1643.

THe weighty charge and trust put upon us by the Generall Assembly of this Kirk, hath given us the boldnesse, in this time of so great danger to Religion, to His Majesties Person, Crown, and Posteritie, & to all His Majesties Dominions, through the insolencie and prevailing power of Papists and the Prelaticall partie, to represent unto His Majestie by supplication, our humble thoughts and desires for a speedy remedy; By disbanding all Papists out of His Army; by calling an Assemblie of godly and sound Divines, unto which some of the Commissioners may be sent from the Kirk of Scotland, that by the blessing of GOD upon their labours, the so much desired unity in Religion and Kirk-government, may be brought about and settled in both Kingdomes; and by the faithful using of all good means for the Conversion of the Queens Majestie to the profession and practice of the true reformed Religion, which we conceive a principall part of the remedie.

This Kirk and Kingdome hath the sympathie and fears, but the Houses of Parliament, and the Kingdome of England have the sufferings and sense of these evils; We are in the danger, they in the distresse; The miseries are imminent to us, but incumbent upon them: And therefore the Commissioners of the Assembly do only represent their Brotherly and Christian fellow-feeling of the present condition of that Kingdome, and their fears ere it be long, unlesse the mercifull and mighty GOD prevent it by his gracious providence, of the like calamities

ties unto themſelves, Together with their earneſt prayers for Englands deliverance and their own ſafety: And do earneſtly intreat, that the Parliament may be pleaſed for their part, and ſo much as in them lyeth, ſpeedily to apply the fore-named Remedies, by disbanding Papiſts, if any be in their Armies, as is alledged in diverſe Declarations; by the ful manifeſtation and conſtant proſecution of their deſires of unitie in Religion and Kirk-government; by their inſtant and unceſſant dealing with His Majeſtie for calling ſuch an Aſſembly of Divines, & by their ſerious thoughts and endeavours about the Queen her converſion, that the high provocation of Idolatrie may no more be tolerated in the land: For which ends the Commiſſioners of the Aſſembly have ſent up for the preſent with the Lord Chancellor, and others from the Commiſſioners for conſerving of peace, one of their number, a beloved and faithfull brother Mr *Alexander Henderſon*, faithfully & fully to expreſſe their meaning in the particulars, ſo far as the wiſedome of the Parliament ſhall judge it convenient to require or demand, and to make report to themſelves, and unto the General Aſſembly (which is to be called upon the occaſion of the preſent exigence and neceſſity through the danger of Religion) of the principall letts and hinderances of Reformation and unity in Religion, and where the work doth ſtay. As they do above all other things deſire, that againſt all tentations and oppoſition, whatſoever may promove or conduce for this bleſſed Reformation, may from the zeal and by the wiſedome of the Houſes of Parliament be diligently gone about, without waiting for a more ſettled condition of the State; ſo do they nothing doubt but this being done, wrath ſhall be turned away from the Realme, the brightneſſe of the preſence of God, accompanying the Reformation of Religion, ſhal ſcatter all the clouds of dif-

ferences betwixt His Majestie and them, and His powerfull providence shall both incline the Kings heart to the same Reformation, and to the establishing of their Civill Liberties and Laws, and move the Houses of Parliament after a speciall manner and in all cheerfulnesse to manifest their tender and dutifull care of His Majesties sacred Person, and of His Royall Greatnesse and Authority, as a principall mean of the Greatnesse and Prosperity of that, and other His Majesties Kingdomes, that all by-past miseries being buried in oblivion, and the present distempers being perfectly cured, the Iland of Britain may be an holy and happy Land, wherein GOD may be served according to His Word, the King obeyed according to His Laws, and the people live a quiet and peaceable life in all godlinesse and honesty, to the Admiration of the World, the envy of all wicked and Antichristian enemies, and to the comfort of all that love the Lord Jesus Christ.

A. Ker *Cler. Commiss. Gen. Ass.*

The Letter of the Commissioners of the Generall Assembly, direct to the right reverend their well-known and much approved Brethren of the Ministery of the Kirk of *England*.

Right revcrend and dear Brethren,

OUr earnest & unceassant desires of unity in Religion, the present distresse of England & Ireland, the danger to Religion in all His M^ties Dominions, & the fears we have of an universal combustion, universally deserved by our not knowing the time of our visitation, & the things which belong unto our peace, have constrained us with greater liberty then formerly, to sollicit his M^ty by our supplication, & the honorable houses of Parliament by our Declaration, which we have sent by the

the hand of our reverend Brother, and much approved Commissioner, Master *Alexander Henderson*, who will also make known to you our care and diligence to discover and remove such letts and hinderances of the Peace and Union of the two Kingdomes, as by the subtiltie and malignancie of some few bad Instruments have been cast in the way; that this whole Kirk and Kingdome may be intirely kept in the prosecution of their desires of civill peace and religious unity, wherein (by the mercy of God) we have the happinesse that the Lords of Privie Councel, and the Commissioners for conserving the Peace betwixt the two Kingdomes, have not denyed their honourable help and assistance. Your present sufferings, wherein wee your Brethren cannot but have our fellow-feeling, and the late experience of somwhat the like among our selves, may teach us both, that Satan and his instruments, in whom he now worketh, are in a rage at the Reformation of Religion; nor is it any new or strange thing, that a time of Reformation be a time of trouble and difficultie: But your comfort and ours is, that the Arm of the Lord is not shortned, and that he who is in us, is stronger than he who is in the world. We make no question of your vigilancie, circumspection and faithfulnes, & that no present nor future opposition will prevail so far, as to make you either more remisse in your intentions and desires of ordering all things in the House of the God of Heaven, according to his own will & commandment, or so much as to lay aside so great & necessary a Work in expectation of a fitter opportunity, & a more peaceable and convenient season. We are very confident, that ye wil be stedfast and unmoveable, alwaies abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know your work is not in vain in the Lord. We for our part shall, through the Lords assistance by our prayers,

with Fasting and Humiliation, and by our best endeavours be helpers together for the wished end. At the first Reformation of Religion in this Land, a very small number of Ministers, without the help, and with the contradiction of the world, through the mighty presence, and blessing of God upon their weak labours, brought the Work at last to perfection: And in the beginnings of our late Reformation, when we were assembled at Glasgow against the Prelacie, the Ceremonies and Service-book, a great part of the Assembly intended no such alteration in the Form of Worship and Kirk-government, as they were moved unanimously to consent unto in the end. When the time of Reformation cometh, the wisedome and spirit of God in his servants, cannot be resisted by the wit and power of man. What although ye should sowe, and the Posteritie reap? Hath not the Lord sent both you and us to reap that whereon neither of us bestowed any labour? other men laboured, and we are entred into their labours. Wee of this Iland are set upon the stage, at this time, the eyes of all the Reformed Kirks are upon us, we are after a speciall manner made a spectacle to the World, to Angels, to Men. Our cares must be so to acquite our selves, that we make not our Friends, the followers of Christ, to mourn; and our enemies, the favourers of Antichrist, to triumph and rejoyce: Which that we may do, is, and shall be the prayer of

Edinburgh, Jan. 1643.

Your most loving Brethren and fellow-labourers in the Work of the Lord, the Commissioners of the Generall Assembly.

M. Robert Douglas Moderator.
A. Ker *Cler. Commiss. Gen. Ass.*

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Commission to M. *Alexander Henderson*

Edinburgh, January 20. 1643.

WE the Commissioners of the late Generall Assembly, having power & commission by all lawful & Ecclesiastick waies, to further this great Work of Union of this Iland in Religion and Kirk-government, to continue our own peace at home, & the common peace betwixt the Nations, to keep correspondence with the Kirk of England, to concurre with the Councell & Conservers of peace at home & abroad in all Ecclesiastick wayes, and to send some to present & prosecute their desires & humble advice to the Kings Majestie, and the Parliament of England and Ministrie there, for the furthering & perfecting of so good & great a work: Considering the necessity at this time, of sending some from this Kirk intrusted with commission, to concur with the Commissioners now sent from the Lords, & others of the Commission of Parliament for conserving of peace, to the Kings Majestie & Parliament of England, in all lawful & Ecclesiastick waies to promove these good ends, And having certain knowledge of the faithfulnesse and abilities of our reverend and loving brother Master *Alexander Henderson* Minister at Edinburgh, Gives therefore unto him by thir presents full power and Commission, our expresse mandate and charge to repaire to the Kingdome of England, and there, with concurrence of the saids Commissioners sent from the Conservaters of peace, to present unto the Kings Majesty our humble Petition, & to obtain His Majesties gracious Answer thereunto: and with concurrence foresaid to present unto the Parliament of England our humble Advice & Declaration: and also to deliver to our brethren of the

the Ministerie in that Kirk [illegible] to them. And to do all things with [illegible] forefaid, or by himself in all lawfull and Ecclesiastick wayes, for prosecuting and promoving our desires to the Kings Majesty, and Parliament, and to our brethren of the Ministery there, for that blessed union of this [illegible] Religion and Kirk-government according to the [illegible] and Constitutions of this Kirk: for continuing and establishing a firm peace at home and betwixt the nations, and for a good correspondence betwixt the Kirks within the same, conforme to the instructions given, or to be given to him thereanent. The said Master *Alexander* [illegible] giving particular and timous intelligence to us of his travels, and diligence hereintill, and of the [illegible] and successe thereof by every occasion, and being [illegible] to us, and the next Generall Assembly for all his proceedings in the matters generally and particularly hereby committed to his trust.

A. Ker Cler. Commiss. Gen. Ass.

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